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SPECIAL PROBLEMS OF THE LAND-LOCKED COUNTRIES

Draft resolution submitted by Afghanistan, Bolivia, Chad, Laos, Lesotho, Mali, Nepal, Upper Volta, Zambia

The Conference,

Recognizing that:

(a) the land-locked position of many developing countries is a factor seriously inhibiting the expansion of trade and economic development of these countries,

(b) by reason of their land-locked position these developing countries may be seriously hampered in taking advantage of some of the international measures envisaged to support the trade expansion and economic development efforts of all developing countries,

(c) the special problems involved in the promotion of the trade and economic development of the land-locked developing countries, in particular the high cost of transportation, the poor state of infrastructure and other factors inhibiting the execution of their trade expansion and economic development programmes, call for special attention and require special solutions,

Convinced that the international community, when embarking upon a comprehensive policy of cooperation for development, should pay due attention to the special handicaps of the land-locked developing countries,

Guided by the Principles relating to Transit Trade of Land-locked Countries which were adopted without dissent by the first session of UNCTAD (Final Act, Annex A.I.2),

Recalling that, on the basis of these Principles, the United Nations Conference on Transit Trade of Land-locked Countries adopted on 8 July 1965 the Convention on Transit Trade of Land-locked States,

Noting that the Convention entered into force on 9 June 1967 but so far has been ratified or acceded to by only two transit States having a sea-coast,

Noting further that the Convention is open for ratification or accession without any time limit,

Reaffirming its conviction that, for the promotion of the trade and economic development of the land-locked developing countries, it is essential to accord to them adequate transit facilities in terms of international law and practice to enable them to overcome the effects of their land-locked position on their trade and economic development,

Noting that, within the framework of some United Nations regional economic commissions and some regional and sub-regional economic groupings of developing countries, detailed studies of certain important aspects of the special problems of the land-locked developing countries of the regions or sub-regions concerned have been initiated with a view to contributing to their solution,

1. Recognizes that the land-locked developing countries, in view of their special problems mentioned in the preamble of this resolution, deserve special treatment on the lines of that to be accorded to the least developed among the developing countries,

2. Recommends that the appropriate international institutions and the Governments of the developed countries, in their financial and technical assistance programmes in the field of transport and communications, should accord priority attention to the special needs of the land-locked developing countries in extending adequate financial and technical assistance to the projects designed for the development and improvement of transport and communications infrastructure needed by these countries, in particular of the transport modes and facilities most convenient to them, including joint projects for the establishment, expansion and/or improvement of transport and communications facilities serving the transit trade of the land-locked countries,

3. Calls on transit countries to extend their fullest possible co-operation to the formulation and execution of the projects mentioned in the preceding paragraph,

4. Invites the international financial institutions:

(a) to extend to the land-locked developing countries soft term and interest-free loans with a view to assisting them in overcoming the consequences of their higher transportation costs,

(b) to consider the possibility of establishing a special fund designed to subsidize the additional higher transport costs incurred by the land-locked developing countries in so far as these costs result in their higher production costs and lower competitive position,

5. Recommends that transit countries should enter into consultations and negotiations with the respective land-locked developing countries, whether bilaterally or on a regional or sub-regional basis, with a view to examining jointly the special difficulties which the land-locked developing countries face in the promotion of their trade and economic development, and concluding agreements designed to overcome such difficulties in accordance with the nature of each particular case, paying special attention to the facilities requested by the land-locked developing countries for their transit trade, such as:-

- providing adequate and convenient inland transport possibilities as well as warehousing, handling and other port installations and services,
- facilitating the use by the land-locked countries of the most convenient transit routes and transport means, such as highways, railways, inland waterways, ropeways, pipelines and other communication facilities, including the use of their own transport equipment and, where appropriate, the establishment of their own transport facilities,
- providing, for the convenience of traffic in transit, in the transit ports or transhipment points defined areas where goods consigned from or to the land-locked countries could be stored with the simplest possible customs formalities,

- simplifying administrative and other formalities, and eliminating the practice of export and import licences, affecting the transit trade of the land-locked countries,
- granting with regard to tariffs and charges on the transit traffic the most favourable treatment applied to the transport of goods of the transit country concerned and satisfying to the maximum possible extent the needs of the land-locked developing countries for a longer-term stabilization of such tariffs and charges,

6. Recommends that the Governments of countries in which the conference shipping lines and insurance companies have their seat should bring to the attention of the said lines and companies the desirability of according special treatment in their tariff policies to the overseas shipments of the land-locked developing countries in view of their special difficulties,

7. Recommends that all countries within the individual regions, whether land-locked, transit or other coastal countries, without prejudice to world-wide actions, should study and apply special methods of financial and technical co-operation designed to ensure a greater participation of the land-locked developing countries in regional and international trade,

8. Calls on the developed land-locked countries, through the exchange of information, experience, training and technical know-how, to lend special assistance to the land-locked developing countries in working out suitable international solutions to the special problems of the latter.

9. Urges all States invited to become parties to the 1965 Convention on Transit Trade of Land-locked States to ratify the Convention, or accede to it, and to make it effective at the earliest possible date,

10. Requests

(a) the Secretary-General of UNCTAD, in co-operation with the appropriate bodies of the United Nations system which have competence in the particular fields concerned, to undertake studies of the different aspects of the special problems of the land-locked developing countries, including the field of international law, national legislation and practice, various possibilities of international negotiations, transport tariff techniques (e.g. through rates), transit operations (e.g. roll-on roll-off facilities) and other related matters;

(b) the regional economic commissions concerned with the developing regions and the regional and sub-regional economic groupings of the developing countries to continue to pay special attention in their work programmes to the problems peculiar to the land-locked countries of their regions or sub-regions and to the transit trade difficulties and transport handicaps of these countries,

(c) the Secretary-General of UNCTAD to prepare, taking into account the work done in this field by the regional economic commissions and the regional and sub-regional economic groupings of the developing countries, with the assistance of experts familiar with the problems of both land-locked and transit countries, a comprehensive report identifying the most important special problems confronting land-locked developing countries, describing the experience gained so far in the solution of those problems and outlining further practical measures and procedures,

(d) the States members of UNCTAD, the regional economic commissions, the specialized agencies concerned, the economic groupings of the developing countries and other international organizations dealing with the subject to co-operate with the Secretary-General of UNCTAD by providing information relevant to the preparation of the studies and reports mentioned in this paragraph,

(e) the Secretary-General of UNCTAD to follow the progress made in giving effect to the recommendations made in this resolution and to report thereon in his annual reviews of international trade and economic development to be prepared in pursuance of the Trade and Development Board's resolution 19(II),

11. Recommends to the Trade and Development Board to establish a standing group of all interested land-locked, transit and other countries, both members and non-members of the Board, to study the special questions relating to the trade and development of the land-locked developing countries, to consider the studies and reports mentioned above and to prepare recommendations for the Board's consideration and action.